

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 987

PRINTER NO. 1450

AMOUNT

\$2,300,000

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

January 15, 2020

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Hutchinson

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 987 amends Title 35 (Health and Safety) to restructure and enhance the Office of State Fire Commissioner.

This bill requires the State Fire Commissioner (commissioner) to directly report to the Governor. It also authorizes new duties of the commissioner to include:

- Serve as the primary representative for fire services;
- Chair the State Fire Advisory Board;
- Develop a curriculum and provide training, online training and issue certifications;
- Administer the State Fire Academy;
- Collect data and provide analysis and reports related to fires, property damage and injuries or loss of life to the public and fire fighters;
- Conduct after-action reports on significant injuries;
- Administer grant and loan programs as provided by law;
- Assist in statewide recruitment and retention;
- Hire regional technical advisors to assist fire companies with grant and loan assistance, consolidations and mergers, and promoting best practices;
- Promote public education and community risk reduction efforts; and
- Administer a fire equipment distributor certification program.

The legislation provides for the commissioner to be someone who has served as a chief officer or administrative officer of a fire company and to be confirmed by the Senate.

Senate Bill 987 requires that the commissioner must establish guidelines for online and in-person training and maintain a complete listing of available training courses on the office's website. It allows for trainings to be conducted at the State Fire Academy, county training centers, community colleges, or any other area approved by the commissioner. A certificate shall be provided to those who have successfully completed the trainings.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

The bill changes the name of the "Fire Safety Advisory Committee" to the "State Fire Advisory Board". The board shall be made up of the following voting and non-voting members:

- The commissioner;
- The President of the PA Professional Firefighters Association;
- The President of the PA Career Fire Chiefs Association;
- The President of the PA Fire and EMS Institute;
- Nine firefighters appointed by the Governor, of which at least one shall be a certified fire instructor;
- Majority and Minority Chair of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee in the House of Representatives (non-voting); and
- Majority and Minority Chair of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee in the Senate (non-voting).

The Governor may appoint the following members to the board as non-voting members:

- The Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency;
- The Director of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services of the Department of Health; and
- Any representative of fire-related state associations.

The legislation directs the State Fire Advisory Board to meet at least quarterly on matters relating to legislation, innovation programming, standards of cover, the operation of the State Fire Academy and any other matters as requested or directed by the General Assembly.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The provisions contained in Senate Bill 987 are anticipated to have a \$2.3 million annual cost and a \$221,000 one-time cost.

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner has determined that to fully implement the provisions of the bill, an additional 17 new positions, which include nine regional advisors, additional legal staff, and legislative and communications staff, would be required. The additional costs also include the leasing of new office space to house the newly created regional advisor positions. The \$221,000 one-time cost would be utilized in the set-up and outfitting of the new office space for all 17 new positions.